Effective FEBRUARY 2011

MTS Access Rider's Guide

Transportation services for people with disabilities

- **Central San Diego**
  Zone 1
- **North City**
  Zone 2
- **East County**
  Zone 3
- **South Bay**
  Zone 4

MTS Metropolitan Transit System

Fare Information / The Transit Store

One-Way Fare (All Zones) **$4.50**

To make fare payment easier, you may purchase a $45 10-pack ticket book in advance at **The Transit Store** at **102 Broadway in Downtown San Diego**. The Transit Store accepts cash, checks, money orders, traveler's checks, Visa and MasterCard credit cards.

You may also order your prepaid ticket booklets through the mail. Please send a check or money order for the amount of booklets you would like, payable to SANDAG, to:

San Diego Association of Governments
Attn: Pass Sales
401 B Street, Suite 800
San Diego, CA 92101-4231

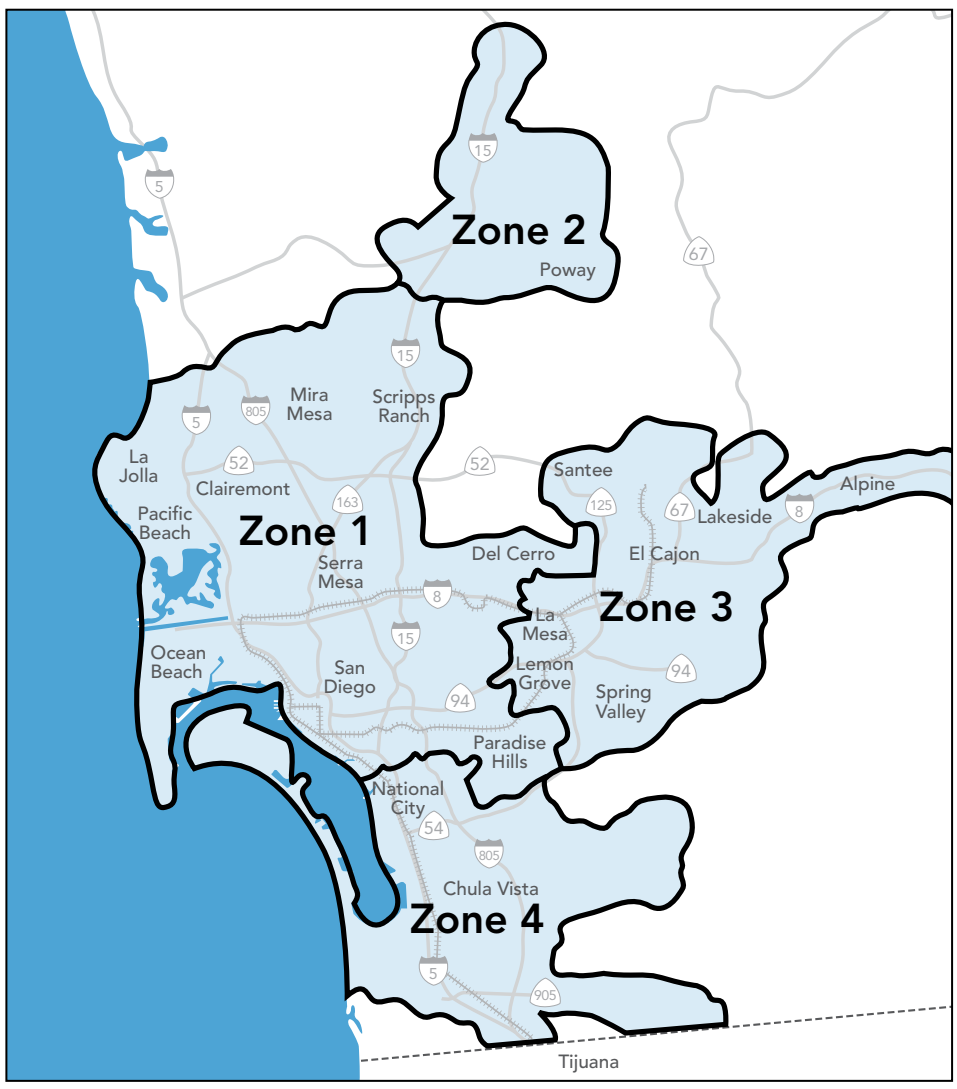
Customer Service

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns regarding our service.

MTS Customer Service **(619) 557-4555**

MTS ADA Services
100 16th Street
San Diego, CA 92101-7490

The Access Paratransit provider also participates in the Accessible Services Advisory Committee (ASAC). Quarterly meetings are held in Downtown San Diego to address the needs and concerns of the disabled community. For more information or a meeting schedule, please call (619) 231-1466.



Service Area Zones

1	Del Cerro Downtown La Jolla Mira Mesa Mt. Hope North Park Oak Park Ocean Beach Pacific Beach Paradise Hills Scripps Ranch Serra Mesa Skyline Tierrasanta
2	Carmel Mountain Poway Rancho Bernardo Sabre Springs
3	Alpine Casa de Oro El Cajon La Mesa Lakeside Lemon Grove Rancho San Diego Santee Spring Valley
4	Chula Vista Coronado Imperial Beach National City Otay Mesa Palm City

Services

MTS Access operates lift-equipped buses that provide curb-to-curb bus service. The program operates in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). ADA service parallels the fixed route service system in your community. Availability of service on any given day will correspond with the days and hours of operation of our trolley and traditional fixed route bus systems. For example, if the bus route closest to you does not run on the weekends, you would not be able to use ADA Paratransit on the weekends, just as a rider on a fixed route bus would not be able to ride the regular bus.

The MTS ADA service area is divided into four zones. Passengers may be required to transfer to another vehicle for interzonal travel just as you would transfer on the MTS bus and trolley network of services. For example, if you live in Poway, and would like to travel to La Jolla, you would likely board a bus in Poway (Zone 2), and transfer to another bus to complete your trip to La Jolla (Zone 1).

To use MTS Access, a passenger must be ADA certified and be traveling within ¾ mile of an operating MTS fixed bus route or trolley line. You can call the MTS Access Paratransit Service provider at 1-888-517-9627 to determine if you are within the ADA service area. It is advantageous to see if the locations of your trip origins and trip destinations are within the MTS service area before beginning the certification process. The ADA Paratransit program is a part of a public transportation system and there are limitations to the service that MTS is able to provide.

If you reside outside the ADA service area, your service would be restricted to trip origins and destinations within our ADA service area. If your home address is outside the ADA service area, you may receive services by choosing a pick-up or drop-off location within our service area. In this scenario, the passenger will be required to transport themselves to/from a location within the service area. MTS Access cannot recommend alternative suitable addresses for trip origin or destination.

Our ADA service area may be modified due to service changes to our fixed route bus and trolley operations. If changes are made to an existing bus or trolley line, corresponding changes are made to the MTS Access service area.

ADA Certification, Eligibility Concerns, and Visitor Information

You must be certified to ride MTS Access. To get certified, you may call 1-877-232-7433 or go online to ADARide.com to request an application. The office has 21 days from the date of receipt to process your application. A verification of certification status will be mailed to you. Certification is required before you can make a trip reservation. If 21 days have passed since your submittal of a complete application, you will be given temporary eligibility until a final determination occurs.

If you are visiting the San Diego area and use ADA Paratransit where you live, you may also enjoy the benefit of MTS Access for up to 21 days of travel in a one-year period. Simply call toll-free 1-877-232-7433 (TTY/TDD: 1-310-410-0985) to be added to our client list. We will require some basic information, and any documentation of your hometown ADA certification would be helpful. If certification documents are unavailable from your local transit agency, then you may demonstrate proof of disability by providing a letter from your doctor.

You may reserve a ride after you have been certified as ADA eligible. There are several levels of eligibility:

- **Unrestricted**: Individuals who are never able to board, ride, disembark, or understand the fixed route bus and trolley system under all circumstances.
- **Restricted:** Individuals who sometimes are not able to board, ride, disembark, or understand the fixed route bus and trolley system.
- **Temporary:** Individuals whose disability may improve over time or with treatment.
- **Visitor:** Verified ADA eligible visitors from outside San Diego County and/or individuals with a visible disability. Visitor eligibility lasts for up to 21 days in any 12-month period (if you travel to other areas and are certified in San Diego, you can contact the transit authority in that area and request visitor eligibility there).
- **Ineligible:** Individuals who indicate or demonstrate they have the functional ability to board, ride, disembark, and understand the fixed route bus and trolley system under all circumstances.

Reservations and Cancellations

To schedule a ride, call 1-888-517-9627 or 1-800-921-9664, any day between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. (TTY/TDD: 1-800-568-7097)

Reservations are accepted from two days in advance up to 5 p.m. the day before travel. For example, if you want to travel on a Monday, you can call to schedule your trip from 8 a.m. on Saturday, up to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Be ready to provide your name, pick-up address, when you would like to travel, your destination address, and if/when you would like to book a return trip. Occasionally, trip times may not be immediately available. In these cases, you will receive a phone call by 5 p.m. the day prior to your ride to notify you of the scheduled pick-up time. Same day trip reservations are permitted on a space available basis and are not guaranteed.

Your reserved pick-up time will be within one hour of your request. Ride times are variable and can be as long as 60–90 minutes (depending on the distance), so please keep this in mind when accepting a trip offer. For example, if you request an 8 a.m. pick-up, your trip offer will be between 7 and 9 a.m. Meanwhile, your arrival time will depend on your trip pick-up time plus the varying amount of time it may take to travel to your destination.

When booking your reservation, you may also reserve a space for one companion which can be anyone (certified or not) that you choose to bring with you. Additional companions may ride on a space available basis. Companions must also pay the fare.

You may always call the toll free number 1-888-517-9627 to check the status of your ride or to verify your confirmed pick-up time. We advise that our highest call volume is between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. Calling during non-peak hours will usually result in a quicker response.

MTS Access can only process pick-up times, and cannot book trips by drop-off times because trip length, passenger loads, traffic conditions, and other variables can affect the travel time. Trip prioritization is prohibited. A service provider is not allowed to prioritize trips by trip purpose. All trips (medical appointments, school schedules, work schedules, beauty appointments, shopping trips, etc.) have equal priority in the MTS Access reservation systems.

If your travel plans change, we request that you call to cancel by 5 p.m. the afternoon before your arranged pick-up time. If we don't receive a cancellation call, you will be charged the regular fare price for the missed trip (also known as a "no show"). If we receive your cancellation call after 5 p.m. the afternoon before the scheduled trip, it will be noted as a "late cancellation." Because the service we provide is so important to so many people, we must enforce a suspension policy for abuse of service. Any passenger who has three no shows within a 30-day period will be suspended from using these services for two weeks. Please call us if you would like a copy of our no show/ late cancellation policy.

Curb-to-Curb Service, Passenger Assistance, and Mobility Concerns

Just like the bus and trolley, MTS Access vehicles operate on a schedule. The vehicle may arrive up to 10 minutes after your scheduled time. Our drivers are required to wait no longer than three minutes past the scheduled time and may be directed to drive on if the passenger is not available at the pick-up location. We cannot delay other passengers by waiting for anyone.

MTS adheres to the ADA policy of providing curb-to-curb service. Just as MTS' fixed route system utilizes curbside bus stops, so must its paratransit program. Drivers will utilize the safest drop-off location and assist the client on and off the vehicle before proceeding.

Drivers are required to remain with the vehicle at all times and cannot help passengers to or away from the vehicle, nor can they supervise a passenger's behavior once they are off of the vehicle. Drivers are also not able to assist passengers with the consumption or transportation of food, beverages, or medication. Paratransit is not recommended for passengers who cannot be left unattended. The ultimate responsibility to accommodate a passenger who cannot be left unattended belongs to the client's caregiver, social worker, or care center.

Passengers who appear, or claim to be, unable to care for themselves and do not have someone to receive them will be transported back to the origin of their trip, to the nearest medical facility, or to a police or sheriff's substation, at the discretion of the paratransit supervisor.

Passengers who become physically violent, disruptive, or who harass and violate the MTS Passenger Code may be suspended from the service. At the time of such an event, the passenger will either be returned to the place of their trip origin or local law enforcement will be called to the scene at the discretion of the paratransit supervisor.

Packages are allowed but are limited to the amount that a passenger can transport on and off the vehicle without assistance from the driver. Drivers cannot assist passengers with luggage or personal packages. All packages must be able to be safely secured under the passenger's seat or in the passenger's lap.

If you require assistance beyond the service level provided under the curb-to-curb standard, you may be certified to travel with a Personal Care Attendant (PCA). PCAs may ride with you free of charge.

The wheelchair lifts on the vehicles are designed to meet the needs of a common wheelchair, as defined by the ADA, which is not to exceed a combined device and passenger weight of 600 pounds, and not to exceed 30 inches in width, and 48 inches in length. Mobility aids that exceed the specifications listed above may not be transported (49 CFR, Section 37.3).

Passengers using service animals or traveling with a respirator or portable oxygen supply are welcome on these services.

Transfers to NCTD Lift

If you plan a trip outside of the MTS service area, the trip will need to be booked with the North County Transit District (NCTD). NCTD has its own paratransit system known as NCTD LIFT; their reservation phone number is 1-760-726-1111. Trips are independently booked by MTS Access (Zones 1–4) and NCTD LIFT. Trips with origins and destinations in different service areas may require a transfer. Trips with origins and destinations across multiple service areas may experience more than one transfer. Therefore, you may be dropped off and left unattended at a designated transfer point before your scheduled pick up time with the other service. Per our curb-to-curb standard, drivers cannot wait with passengers for the next vehicle to arrive.

Subscription and Holiday Service

For passengers with a regular travel pattern, (the same trip on multiple days), subscription service is available on a limited basis. These trips are authorized in the event that scheduling determines that they make operational sense, if they don't impact the service, and if they comply with section 37.133 of the ADA. If subscriptions become an operational detriment, MTS could decide to eliminate all subscription service. Subscriptions, if granted, may be placed on hold for a maximum of 60 days (for vacations, school breaks, etc.). After 60 days, any subscription that has not been reactivated will be discontinued. Passengers who cancel or no show for more than 50% of their subscription rides in any given month may have their subscription services discontinued. At this time, the MTS paratransit contractor, First Transit, will review all subscription requests and they may accept or reject any new subscription ride requests based on the shared ride nature of this service. Changes to subscription rides may result in the discontinuation of the individual's subscription privilege. Only a limited number of subscription trips are available. Please call MTS Access at 1-888-517-9627 for more details.

All subscription trips are automatically cancelled on most holidays and days of reduced service that surround holidays. For a current list of days where subscription trips are cancelled, please contact the MTS paratransit contractor, First Transit, at 1-888-517-9627. If you have a subscription and will still need your ride on a given holiday, you MUST contact the reservation office at least 3 business days prior to the holiday to ensure that your ride is not cancelled.

On-Time Performance, Late Buses, Missed Trips, and Destination Changes

Drivers are provided a 10-minute window to arrive for a scheduled trip time and still be considered "on-time." This 10-minute window starts at the scheduled trip time and ends 10 minutes after the scheduled trip time. For example, if you are given a 7:30 a.m. pick-up time, the vehicle may appear from 7:30 a.m. until 7:40 a.m., and still be considered on-time. On occasion, a cancellation or lighter than average traffic may result in a driver arriving to pick you up earlier than the scheduled pick-up time. As the passenger, you have the option to leave early or require the driver to wait until the scheduled time. It is your choice, and the driver cannot coerce you to leave earlier than you have scheduled.

If your bus is more than 10 minutes late, please call the MTS Access toll free number at 1-888-517-9627 to check on the status of your ride. Please inform the dispatcher that you are checking on the status of a scheduled ride, and provide your name (or the designated passenger's) and pick-up location.

Please be advised that same day trips are not required by the ADA. If you miss your trip, we will attempt to offer you the best trip available. There is no guarantee on how quickly your same day replacement trip may be scheduled, and it may be scheduled much later than is convenient for you.

If a passenger wishes to change their destination while on board the bus, they must call the First Transit reservation office. Destination changes can only be authorized by the First Transit reservations and dispatch departments. If a passenger no longer wishes to travel to the originally booked destination, and the new trip destination cannot be accommodated, or approved by dispatch, the driver will return the passenger to the place of their trip origin.

Children and Personal Care Attendants (PCAs)

On MTS Access, children five years of age or younger may ride free with a fare-paying adult. While a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) may travel without paying a fare, at least one passenger must always pay a full fare. A fare must be paid when an adult or guardian is travelling as the non-paying child's PCA. Likewise, two passengers cannot claim each other as Personal Care Attendants to avoid fare payment.